

Patent claims:

1. A process for the storage of a protein in an aqueous solution, comprising the addition of cysteine to the aqueous solution, wherein said addition results in a delay in the temporal decrease in the effective concentration of the protein.
2. The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the protein is a heterologous protein prepared in a microorganism.
3. The process as claimed in claim 2, wherein the microorganism is a bacterium.
4. The process as claimed in claim 3, wherein the bacterium is *Escherichia coli*.
5. The process as claimed in claim 2, wherein the microorganism is a yeast.
6. The process as claimed in claim 5, wherein the yeast is *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*.
7. The process as claimed in claim 5, wherein the yeast is *Pichia pastoris*.
8. The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the protein is a heterologous protein and is prepared in an insect cell.
9. The process as claimed in claim 2 or claim 8, wherein the protein is prepared from an expression vector construct.

10. The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the protein is present in dissolved form.
- 5 11. The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the protein is present in suspension.
12. The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the concentration of cysteine in the aqueous protein solution is in the range from about 100 mM to about 500 mM.
- 10 13. The process as claimed in claim 12, wherein the concentration of cysteine in the aqueous protein solution is in the range from about 150 mM to about 220 mM.
- 15 14. The process as claimed in claim 12, wherein the concentration of cysteine in the aqueous protein solution is about 170 mM.
15. The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the storage of the protein takes place at about 0°C to about 50°C.
- 20 16. The process as claimed in claim 15, wherein the storage of the protein takes place at about 5°C to about 30°C.
17. The process as claimed in claim 16, wherein the storage of the protein takes place at about 5°C.
- 25 18. The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the protein stored is insulin, an insulin derivative, or a precursor thereof.

19. A process for the preparation and storage of a heterologous protein, comprising the expression of the heterologous protein or its precursor in a transformed microorganism, optional disruption of the microorganism and/or isolation of the heterologous protein or its precursor from the culture medium, and the subsequent storage of the heterologous protein according to the process of claim 1.
20. The process of claim 19, further comprising the renaturation of the heterologous protein or its precursor and the purification and isolation of the heterologous protein, including optional removal of a leader sequence or other sequences that may be present in the precursor of the heterologous protein.
21. The process as claimed in claim 19, wherein the heterologous protein is animal insulin.
22. The process as claimed in claim 20, wherein the animal insulin is human insulin.